

Valley Falls, KS



Betty Jane Wilson, a daughter of Jefferson County, after traveling the world as a top employee of one of America's great airline companies, and returning home to serve in the Valley Falls community, died Thursday, Aug. 8, 2019, at a Topeka hospital. She had celebrated her 99th birthday in July.

She was inducted into the Trans World Airlines Hall of Fame in 1974, and believed that she had one of the grandest jobs as a reservation sales person available to a career woman of her generation. She related that in their early years of operation, in order to make their staff completely familiar with the airline's many destinations, TWA sent their sales agents on long foreign trips to visit many locales. Betty Jane was able to gather first hand information on hotels and area attractions. She was able to visit every continent, except Antarctica, during a long and happy travel life.

Betty Jane was born July 11, 1920, at Nortonville, the daughter of James M. and Lois E. Robinson Wilson. She rode a horse to attend country schools east of Valley Falls and the horse would return home by itself. Only one time did the horse not return, and her father found it in a neighbor's corn field, as a gate had been left open!

She graduated from Winchester High School in 1938 and Baker University in 1943. She began her career with TWA in Kansas City, MO, in 1944. She transferred within the company to St. Louis in 1963, and retired in 1985.

Her deep roots in Valley Falls drew her back home to live with her mother. She became deeply involved with community activities. She was immediately drafted onto three committees at the Valley Falls United Methodist Church. She was most recently a volunteer at the church's Clothes Closet ministry. One of her greatest passions was the Valley Falls Historical Society, where she served as president for many years.

Survivors include cousins, Phyllis Scarlett, Newton, and Raney Gilliland, and his wife Jill, and their son, Asher, all of Topeka. Long time friends are Carolyn Cupp and Mark Morris, Liberty, MO, and their children, Sarah Rankin, Santa Cruz, CA, and Will Morris, Peoria, IL.

The funeral service will be at 11:00 a.m. Monday, Aug. 12, 2019, at the Valley Falls United Methodist Church. Burial will follow at the Nortonville Cemetery. Visitation will be from 10:00 a.m. until service time.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Valley Falls United Methodist Church or to the Valley Falls Historical Society, and sent c/o Mercer Funeral Home, PO Box 6, Valley Falls, KS 66088. Online condolences are welcome at www.mercerfuneralhomes.com.